



May 30, 2019

Mayor Liz Alpert
City of Sarasota
City Hall
1565 First Street
Sarasota, FL 34236

Dear Mayor Alpert:

As you know, the Sarasota Orchestra has had an extensive facility planning process underway for more than five years with a team of nationally recognized consultants and in collaboration with our Facility Task Force and Board of Directors. We have also been active community partners and supporters of Bayfront 2020 and The Bay Conservancy.

In June 2018, the Orchestra presented a major update to the City Commission wherein we provided a comprehensive planning update. In the course of that update, we shared the Board's unanimous decision to move off the Bayfront but to remain in the City of Sarasota. In the June 2018 presentation to the City Commission, the Orchestra highlighted four critical success factors central to the facility planning effort. The Four Critical Success Factors include:

- Timeliness (urgency)
- Artistic and Educational Integrity
- Philanthropic Considerations
- Business and Economic Viability

On February 26, 2019, the Sarasota Orchestra presented to the City Commission a vision to relocate the Orchestra from one City Park to another City Park, thereby achieving a mutual goal of retaining one of the City's longstanding cultural organizations in the City of Sarasota. The vision and planning was and continues to be an Orchestra led initiative. We are grateful to the City staff that provided resource information and answered our questions during this process.

On May 20, 2019, the Orchestra returned to update the City Commission on explorations and discussions since the vision and the Payne Park concept was revealed some 90 days ago. In the end, the City Commission, with a four to one vote, determined that the Orchestra vision was not viable despite a very compelling rationale and a supportive legal opinion.

The Orchestra has approached its work with diligence and with a long view vision for the next 100 years. Those efforts, work completed to date and our deep commitment to quality and comprehensive planning will continue to guide our work going forward.

In light of the decision of the City Commission on May 20, 2019, to decline further planning at Payne Park, the Sarasota Orchestra is moving forward.

In my capacity as Board Chair and on behalf of my colleagues on the Board. I wanted to provide you the courtesy that our 18-member Board of Directors has unanimously approved the following Facility Planning Directive.

“Effective May 28, 2019, the Board of Directors of Sarasota Orchestra directs the Facility Task Force of the Sarasota Orchestra and its senior management to expand its site exploration for a new music center beyond the Sarasota City limits.”

We are grateful to you and past City Commissions for their support and vision. While our site search has been expanded beyond the City, the Orchestra shall not foreclose any viable options for a City location that meets our Four Critical Success Factors. We look forward to any options you may have that meet those Criteria.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Steves", is positioned above the printed name and title.

David Steves
Chair, Board of Directors
Sarasota Orchestra

CC: Vice-Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch
Commissioner Willie Charles Shaw
Commissioner Shelli Freeland Eddie
Commissioner Hagen Brody
City Manager Tom Barwin
City Attorney Robert Fournier
City Auditor and Clerk Shayla Griggs